

UNITED STATES SENATOR • IOWA

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Senate Passes Grassley Resolution on Russia

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, ranking member of the Committee on Finance, today offered an amendment expressing a sense of the Senate in support of President Bush's efforts to strengthen the U.S.-Russian relationship. The Senate accepted the amendment on a voice vote.

Grassley's statement on the amendment and the amendment text follow.

Statement of Sen. Chuck Grassley on the Sense of the Senate

Mr. President, I rise to offer an amendment which expresses a sense of the Senate in support of the President's efforts to strengthen our relationship with Russia. The amendment also seeks to build upon that relationship by expressing the Senate's support for restoring permanent normal trade relations with Russia.

Given the upcoming meeting between President Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin, this resolution is a timely opportunity for the Senate to express its support for recent developments between the two countries and also express encouragement for the two Presidents when they meet later this week.

Since September 11, a new partnership has grown between the United States and Russia as a result of our close cooperation and common efforts in the fight against international terrorism. This enhanced relationship recently produced a new strategic framework between Russia and the United States to significantly reduce stockpiles of nuclear weapons by 2012.

And, the United States and Russia, along with our NATO partners, have further institutionalized the U.S.-Russia security cooperation through the establishment of the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council, which meets for the first time on May 28, in Rome. It is clear that historic progress is being made between the United States and Russia, and that even more forward movement would be beneficial for both countries.

For that reason, I believe the time has come for Congress to seriously consider the elimination of the Jackson-Vanik requirements with regard to Russia, and begin to debate the extension of normal trade relations. President Bush has recently asked Congress to restore permanent normal trade relation status for Russia based on its policies of free and unfettered emigration.

However, there are important issues that must be addressed during this discussion. For example, there are some outstanding trade issues that need to be addressed. Among these are recent problems dealing with U.S. poultry exports to Russia. We also need to see greater progress on religious freedom and human rights concerns in Russia. I'm pleased that President Bush has stated his commitment to work with Russia to help freedom and tolerance become fully protected in Russian law and life.

President Bush has also stated his commitment to work with Russia to advance free emigration, safeguard religious liberty, and enforce legal protections for ethnic and religious minorities. I am hopeful that President Bush will further address these concerns openly and candidly with President Putin during his upcoming visit.

Mr. President, I believe the best hope for a positive future between our two countries is to develop an understanding of, and appreciation for each culture, with both personal and business relationships. The development of commerce, international trade, and the sharing of ideas will further advance economic and political stability for both Americans and Russians.

I therefore encourage my colleagues to support this resolution which supports President Bush's policy objectives with respect to the Russian Federation, and calls for the termination, in an appropriate and timely manner, of the application of the Jackson-Vanik provision to Russia.

Text of the Sense of the Senate

SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE UNITED STATES-RUSSIAN FEDERATION SUMMIT MEETING, MAY 2002.

(a) FINDINGS.--The Senate finds that--

(1) President George W. Bush will visit the Russian Federation May 23-25, 2002, to meet with his Russian counterpart, President Vladimir V. Putin;

(2) the President and President Putin, and the United States and Russian governments, continue to cooperate closely in the fight against international terrorism;

(3) the President seeks Russian cooperation in containing the war-making capabilities of Iraq, including that country's ongoing program to develop and deploy weapons of mass destruction;

(4) during his visit, the President expects to sign a treaty to significantly reduce American and Russian stockpiles of nuclear weapons by 2012;

(5) the President and his NATO partners have further institutionalized United States-Russian security cooperation through establishment of the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council, which meets for the first time on May 28, 2002, in Rome, Italy;

(6) during his visit, the President will continue to address religious freedom and human rights concerns through open and candid discussions with President Putin, with leading Russian activists, and with representatives of Russia's revitalized and diverse Jewish community; and

(7) recognizing Russia's progress on religious freedom and a broad range of other mechanisms

to address remaining concerns, the President has asked the Congress to terminate application to Russian of title IV of the Trade Act of 1974 (commonly known as the “Jackson-Vanik Amendment”) and authorize the extension of normal trade relations to the products of Russia.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.--The Senate--

(1) supports the President’s efforts to deepen the friendship between the American and Russian peoples;

(2) further supports the policy objectives of the President mentioned in this section with respect to the Russian Federation;

(3) supports terminating the application of title IV of the Trade Act of 1974 to Russia in an appropriate and timely manner; and

(4) looks forward to learning the results of the President's discussions with President Putin and other representatives of the Russian government and Russian society.